

## **Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes**

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on September 22, 2011.

### **Members Present:**

Joe Cooper  
Vincent DiBella  
Keiko Dilbeck  
Merlin Ellis

Natascha Karadseh  
Dr. D. Kent Layton  
Lars Nielson, Jr.

### **Members Absent:**

Wesley Ringle  
Dr. Robbi D. Venditti  
Pamela Williams

### **Staff Present:**

Cindy Ornstein  
Tom Wilson  
Sunnee O'Rork  
Jean Kaminski

Lars Nielson, Jr., Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Lars Nielson, Jr., Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes from the July 28 meeting. There being none, Dr. D. Kent Layton made a motion, Vince DiBella seconded, and the Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of July 28. They will be posted on the City's website.

**Public Comments:** There was no public present.

### **Information and Discussion – Review the Panel Ratings and Funding Recommendations for the Creative Economy Fund – Lars Nielson, Jr. and Cindy Ornstein**

The new Creative Economy Fund received 12 applications for FY11-12. Lars Nielson, Jr., Chair, facilitated a panel of three who reviewed and rated each application. There were five criteria each applicant was rated on which included: the quality of their project; relationship with Mesa Arts Center and/or community; new and/or different experience the project would bring to Mesa Arts Center audiences and/or community; prospect of reaching and attracting new audiences; and the likelihood of success of the proposed project. The Creative Economy Fund had \$25,000 to distribute; awards were based on total overall score with 25 – 20.6 receiving 100% of their request; 20.5 – 18 receiving 75% of their request; 18.1 – 16.7 receiving 60% of their request; 16.8 – 14.1 receiving 40% of their request; and 14.2 – 0 receiving nothing. Everyone who applied received a portion of their requested amount. The applicants and their recommended awards are: Actor's Youth Theatre/\$874; Art Renaissance Foundation/Terpsicore Dance Co./\$900; Class 6 Theatre/\$1,725; CYT Phoenix (Christian Youth Theater)/\$3,750; East Valley Children's Theatre/\$2,000; Mesa Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration Committee/\$240; Mesa Encore Theatre/\$640; Phoenix Symphony Association (The Phoenix Symphony)/\$3,750; Resonance Vocal Ensemble/\$600; Salt River Brass/\$3,750; Southwest Shakespeare Company/\$5,000; and Theater League, Inc./\$2,000.

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board unanimously concurred with the recommended awards. The applicants will be notified of their awarded amount via e-mail on Friday, September 23, followed by a formal letter of congratulations.

It was noted that, as the Creative Economy Fund was conceived late in the fiscal year, leaving a short amount of time for applicants to apply, Mesa Arts Center was pleased to receive 12 applications. Next year, the process will begin much earlier and organizations will have more time to be creative and apply.

### **Information and Discussion – Review Arts and Culture Talking Points – Lars Nielson, Jr.**

Lars Nielson, Jr. asked to table the discussion on the Arts and Culture Talking Points until the next meeting. Talking Points for Mesa Arts Center, Arizona Museum for Youth, and Arizona Museum of Natural History were included in this month's packet. However, Mr. Nielson would like the Board to create talking points on their own, so each Board member understands the vision and mission of the Board. The next Board meeting is set for December 1 (due to the November meeting date falling on Thanksgiving Day).

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Arizona Museum for Youth – Sunnee O'Rork**

- The "Warner Bros. Cartoon" exhibit will open with a VIP reception on Thursday, September 29, 5:30 – 7 p.m. and will open to the public the following morning at 10 a.m.
- The Friends Board had a Board Source retreat on September 17; the retreat was a success in helping the Board to define their mission and goals.
- In July and August, the Museum had attendance of approximately 6,000 each month and revenues were up. The Museum has stopped accepting Cultural Passes which has helped with revenue numbers.
- Phase One of The Image of the Future program is well under way with the survey about to be deployed.
- The Friends Board is in the final stages of their annual financial review.

- The exhibit team toured the Arizona Latino Arts and Cultural Center. The Museum will be collaborating with them to present three interactive children's activities in September.
- The education team hosted a visit from Free Arts of Arizona Program, which included a guided tour of the Peanuts exhibit and a special art activity for their children and volunteers.
- AMY appeared on CBS Radio Phoenix and the 12 News AZ Midday Show in August.
- As part of her Piper Trust Fellowship, Sunnee O'Rork traveled to Oregon, Chicago, and Wisconsin to visit the Oregon Museum of Science & Industry, Portland Children's Museum, Portland Museum of Art, Kohl's Children's Museum, DuPage Children's Museum, Betty Brinn Children's Museum, Milwaukee Art Museum, Madison Children's Museum, and the Art Institute of Chicago. She has one more trip to CA in October and November to complete her research on traveling exhibitions. Travelling exhibitions would be a new revenue source for AMY.

#### Arizona Museum of Natural History – Dr. Tom Wilson

- The Museum, in participation with the Mesa Takes Flight initiative, has opened "The Hubble Space Telescope: New Views of the Universe" exhibit in July. On September 30, the Museum will have "A Night with the Stars" and has invited a number of astronomy club members from around the Valley to be there. The evening will take place on the roof of the garage right behind the Museum on the east side. Another exhibit in conjunction with Mesa Takes Flight is "First Flight: Rulers of the Prehistoric Skies." Cindy Ornstein made a presentation to Council, in Dr. Wilson's absence, to ask permission to purchase a Quetzalcoatlus fossil from Texas, the biggest animal that has ever flown and is larger than a four-seat Cessna with a wing span of 39 feet. Staff is also producing a model of a Pteranodon who has a wing span of 24 feet. These animals are not birds. Birds are decedents of dinosaurs and are contemporary dinosaurs. These animals are from a lineage that led to prehistoric flying reptiles, which is the same ancestral lineage that led to the dinosaurs. The First Flight exhibit opens January 28.
- "Vanishing Circles: Portraits of Disappearing Wildlife of the Sonoran Desert Region," an exhibition of endangered landscapes, animals, and plants of the Sonoran Desert, opened Friday, September 16.
- The Museum had a strong July and August. Traditionally, September has been a slow month, but this year the Museum is doing well with strong home school days, a special needs day on September 9, as well as 12 birthday parties planned in September.
- The Museum continues their work at Mesa Grande. They continue seeking funding for the welcoming center, gathering place, and interpretation of the trail; to-date, they have \$262,000 in hand and have sent out requests for \$161,000 with positive responses for approximately \$40,000. The interpretive trail is being funded by the Arizona Heritage Fund. Mesa Grande is recognized by the state of Arizona as an official Centennial 2012 Legacy Project – there will be a celebration at the site on February 11, 2012, with the grand opening the following weekend.

#### Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Cindy Ornstein Reported for Rob Schultz

- Mesa Arts Center's kickoff event, Guitars and Handlebars, was a strong success with a total attendance for the three days estimated at approximately 10,000, even though the big concert on Saturday was cancelled due to stormy weather, and because of the forecast, 20 classic cars withdrew. Mesa Contemporary Arts alone had over 4,200 attendees at Friday night's opening reception with a total of 9,100 over the three day period; last year, Mesa Contemporary Arts had a total attendance of 21,000 for the year. As of July 1, Mesa Contemporary Arts now has free admission, which will introduce a larger audience to contemporary art and will add value to other offerings at MAC.
- The MAC Store has transitioned to the MAC Store Artists Cooperative and had their grand opening in conjunction with the season kickoff weekend. There were 144 items sold, bringing in over \$2,500 in sales. Artists and the Steering Committee were elated and energized to keep the cooperative open, exciting, and relevant. There are 56 artists in the cooperative at this time.
- Fall semester arts class registration continues its upward trend with revenue at approximately 20% higher than this time last year. This follows the strongest single year ever in FY10-11, with total revenue of \$525,000. This is already the strongest fall ever at Mesa Arts Center.
- The new Creative Aging Program began on a positive note with two artists-in-residence: Elizabeth Johnson, dance instructor, and Tessa Windt, fiber artist. Both instructors have experience in working with seniors. Elizabeth Johnson had 14 residents at east Mesa's Fellowship Square that participated in her first dance workshop. She will also be working with residents at Sirrine Adult Day Care. Tessa Windt will begin her fibers workshop next month at East Valley Resource Center in downtown Mesa. Elizabeth Johnson will also be the choreographer for the large commissioned dance piece with the community at the Centennial Festival in February 2012. We anticipate this to be a multigenerational performance with performers ranging from ages 12 to 80.

## **Director's Report – Cindy Ornstein**

Arts and Culture is expanding the education outreach program with a Culture Connect Program bringing four multicultural artists into the area schools from the Performing Live Series, workshops and master classes with visiting artists, two teaching artists from Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater who will be here during spring break in March conducting workshops with the community, and continue the basic arts program at Lowell Elementary.

Performing Live kicked off the season with "Return to Forever IV with Zappa Plays Zappa" – a great performance that had 1,385 attending. Performing Live ticket sales are at 55% of our projected revenue for FY11-12.

Mesa Encore Theatre will be honored at the City Council meeting on Monday, September 26, as the Mayor has proclaimed September 30 as Mesa Encore Theatre Day in recognition of their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Douglas Brimhall, former Museum and Cultural Advisory Board Chair, will read and present the proclamation at the Council meeting.

Cindy Ornstein attended the Diving Lady Fundraiser. Among the commentary the Mayor's HEAT initiative was mentioned, which is the Mayor's priorities for **H**ealthcare, **E**ducation, **A**viation, and **T**ourism/**T**echnology. Keiko Dilbeck had asked if there was anything the Board could do to support bringing education organizations to Mesa. Ms. Ornstein replied that the City's Economic Development Department has been working diligently toward that goal. MAC Staff has given tours to four-five schools who have shown interested in a satellite school in downtown Mesa and three others who will be visiting in the near future.

## **Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only**

Merlin Ellis reported he attending the season kick-off event and saw a large number of people he has never experienced on campus before – exciting to see such diversity. He also attending the "Return to Forever IV with Zappa Plays Zappa" concert and said it was an amazing show; he come specifically to see Dweezil Zappa, but enjoyed "Return to Forever" as well; he didn't realize that Chick Corea and Stanley Clarke were part of the "Return to Forever" band.

Keiko Dilbeck attended the Diving Lady fundraiser; a fun, cool event. It was asked if they raised enough to complete the project. Cindy Ornstein responded by saying they did raise some of the money, but not all. The artist who is restoring the Diving Lady is committed to finishing and as they raise the funds they pay him.

Lars Nielson, Jr., reminded the Board members present to be sure to RSVP when they receive their packet as to their attendance at the next meeting, so we know whether we will have a quorum.

Dr. D. Kent Layton commented that he is appreciative for the City Management and Council now in place that is supportive of arts programming. Cindy Ornstein noted that the City did credit Mesa Arts Center with \$25,000 in the current budget which made it possible for MAC to create the Creative Economy Fund.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m. The next Board meeting is scheduled for **December 1**.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Ornstein, Director  
Arts and Culture Department